

May 16, 2023

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR LINDSEY P. HORVATH

Support for AB 1386 (Gabriel): California Veterans Supportive Housing Expansion Act

The California State Veterans Housing and Homelessness Prevention Program (VHHP) allocates funds project-by-project to affordable housing developers who combine VHHP dollars with money from other supportive housing sources to construct new multifamily housing developments targeted for veterans experiencing homelessness. At least 50 percent of the funds awarded serve veteran households with extremely low incomes, at 30 percent of the area median income (AMI).

However, once many veterans become connected to benefits, including disability benefits, their income exceeds the 30% AMI threshold, making them ineligible for the VHHP housing units. This leaves some buildings with high vacancy rates and struggling to fill units, while many veterans remain homeless.

The VHHP funding has produced over 88 affordable housing developments, producing roughly 5,665 units for Veterans (3,058) and non-Veterans (2,607) since 2014. Funding has been geographically targeted to encourage the development of veteran housing in regions with high concentrations of California's most vulnerable Veterans. Yet, many units remain unfilled due to the eligibility requirements. Our state continues to hold the largest population of homeless veterans in the country-approximately 31% of the national total.

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Homeless veterans are overrepresented in California's homeless population, and being a Veteran is associated with a higher risk of homelessness in our state. According to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), 10% of all homeless Veterans nationwide are in Los Angeles County. As seen with the challenges that recent housing efforts for homeless Veterans have faced, such as the VA's west LA campus that yielded just 11% of its projected number of units, building new supportive housing is incredibly difficult.

AB 1386 ensures available beds for homeless Veterans do not go empty. This bill would allow the VHHP program, along with certain qualified supportive housing developments restricted to extremely low-income Veterans, to expand housing resources to Veterans who do not typically qualify for the existing program while first ensuring that lower-income Veterans are prioritized. The bill allows local homeless systems to match a Veteran experiencing homelessness with an income at or below 60 percent AMI in cases when a Veteran with a lower income cannot be located.

I, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors direct the Chief Executive Office, through the Legislative Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations Branch, to advocate in support of Assembly Bill 1386, which would expand the number of veterans eligible for affordable housing, including sending a five-signature letter in support of the bill to Assemblymember Jesse Gabriel.

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